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Ministry of Health
Ministry of Economic Development

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES GET BOOST FROM PROVINCE

VICTORIA – Health Minister George Abbott announced a program that will help internationally educated physicians better navigate the health system today.

"The $258,000 BC Physician Integration Program (BC PIP) provides internationally educated physicians on temporary licensure in B.C. with a one-stop, co-ordinated approach to finding the right pathway towards practising in the health-care sector," said Abbott.

"The Province is following through on a commitment made in the throne speech to further extend the welcome mat to internationally educated health professionals and support those who are adding their expertise to B.C.'s health sector," Abbott continued. "This new program will provide the crucial service of giving international health professionals the tools they need to help them navigate the health system. It represents a new and innovative way of doing business."

The BC PIP is part of a larger $75-million, five-year Health Canada-funded initiative called 'Connecting Educated Health Professionals to the BC Health Sector Workforce,' designed to help internationally educated health professionals in B.C. access the assessment, education, registration and employment bridging supports that match their skills and qualifications.

"The health sector is just one area in the province that is feeling the pressures from the current labour and skills shortage in British Columbia," said Colin Hansen, Minister of Economic Development. "Along with our recent expansion of the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program to include health sector occupations, this is one more way that we are working to ensure health professionals who are interested in moving to B.C. have the tools they need to be successful."

Funding for the BC PIP has been provided through the ministries of Health and Economic Development. The program will be delivered through a series of workshops under the guidance of the UBC Faculty of Medicine and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia. Eligible candidates for the program must have been on the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC's temporary register after Oct. 1, 2007 and be currently practising as a physician.

The first BC PIP Orientation Conference is scheduled for April 18-19, 2008, and will include presentations on health care in B.C.; the roles of the Ministry of Health, health authorities, the BCMA and the College of Physicians and Surgeons; e-health technologies; chronic disease management; continuing professional development; and the IMG experience.

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"The College has recognized that internationally trained physicians who are new to British Columbia have lacked the support necessary for their rapid integration and orientation to practise medicine in this province," said Dr. Elliott Phillips, deputy registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC. "The BC PIP will provide a much-needed opportunity to educate these physicians in the nuances of medical practice specific to B.C. and Canada, and will better prepare them to deliver the high standard of quality care that Canadians have come to expect."

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Media contact: Michelle Stewart
Communications Director
Ministry of Health
250 812-5571 (cell)
250 952-1887 (media line)

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